A number of witnesses maintained that an elected Senate ought to have the same legislative powers as the House of Commons or, more accurately, that it should continue to have the powers assigned to it by the *Constitution Act, 1867*. The argument was made that two legislative bodies, both elected on the basis of universal suffrage, should be on an equal footing. Doubts were also raised about the quality of the candidates who would want to run for seats in a chamber whose powers were markedly inferior to those of the House of Commons. The result of this line of argument would be a Senate exercising an absolute veto over all legislation voted by the House, with the possible exception of money bills. If there were persistent disagreement between the two chambers, the disputed bill might be left in abeyance, or a joint committee composed of members from each house could try to agrée on a mutually satisfactory redrafting. Some people proposed that if the disagreement persisted, a joint session of the two chambers could be held to resolve it by a majority vote; and, if that failed, both houses could be dissoved and an election called.

Thus, if the Senate enjoyed an absolute veto, the parliamentary process would become considerably more unwieldy than if it had just a suspensive veto. The government would have to be responsible to both houses. Double dissolution could mean a proliferation of elections, and the threat of dissolution could become an instrument of government control over senators. But the principal factor in our decision not to accord the Senate an absolute veto was the possibility, if not the probability, of our parliamentary institutions continually becoming deadlocked. The example of the Australian Senate, whose legislative powers are practically equal to those of the lower house, illustrates that this fear is not merely academic.

We therefore decided that it was wiser and more in keeping with the character of parliamentary government to give the Senate the power to delay but not altogether prevent the adoption of measures voted by the House of Commons. The Senate would therefore have a suspensive veto of a maximum of 120 sitting days, divided into two equal periods of 60 days. Supply bills would not be subject to any delay. The mechanism we have in mind would work as follows:

(a) Bills passed by the House of Commons would be transmitted without delay to the Senate.

(b) Within the 60 sitting days following the transmission of a bill from the House, the Senate would make a final decision on it, either adopting it, rejecting it, or passing it with amendments. If the Senate had not made a final decision on a bill within the prescribed delay period, the bill could be presented direct to the Governor General for royal assent.

(c) A bill adopted by the House of Commons and rejected by the Senate could not be presented to the Governor General for assent unless the House of Commons had adopted the bill a second time. That second adoption could not take place unless at least 60 sitting days had elapsed since the Senate rejected the bill.

(d) If the Senate amended a bill passed by the House of Commons, the amendments would be transmitted to the Commons, which would have to accept or reject the amendments. If accepted, the bill could then be presented immediately to the Governor General for assent; if rejected, the bill could be